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Application No.: 09/805,555

Docket No.: SONY 3.0-019

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (cancelled)
2. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~4~~40 wherein said age information includes data representative of said user's date of birth.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~4~~40 wherein said personal information includes a user name.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 40~~4~~ wherein said personal information includes a category of information which said user is entitled to receive.
5. (currently amended) The method of claim 40~~4~~ wherein said address comprises an e-mail address.
6. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein said address is not the e-mail address of said user.
7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein said user is a child and said e-mail address is the child's parent's e-mail address.
8. (currently amended) The method of claim 40~~4~~ wherein said personal information includes credit card information.
9. (original) The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of sending said credit card information back to said user and requesting verification of the accuracy of said credit card information.
10. (original) The method of claim 8 further comprising prompting said user to provide credit card information if said user does not verify the accuracy of said credit card information.
11. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein said user has the option of not including said credit card information in the personal information received during said step of receiving said personal information.

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12. (original) The method of claim 11 further comprising prompting said user to provide credit card information if said user opted not to include said credit card information in the personal information received during said step of receiving said personal information.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~40~~ wherein said information is restricted to users based on a cut-off value, and further comprising the step of comparing the age information with said cut-off value.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13 wherein before said steps of sending and receiving permission are performed, conditioned on whether or not a value of the age information contained in personal information is examined to assess whether it meets or exceeds said cut-off value.

15. (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~1-40~~ further comprising the step of sending a notification to said address if another request for information is received from said user before said permission is received.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~1-40~~ wherein prior to said step of sending said permission request being performed, is conditioned of on whether or not said permission was received in the past is checked.

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (previously presented) A method of authenticating a user over a client/server network wherein said server has content restricted to users older than a particular age, said method comprising the steps of said server:

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receiving a request for access to said content from the user of a client of the network,

receiving pre-stored personal information regarding said user, said pre-stored personal information including age data representative of said user's age and an e-mail address on said network, the pre-stored personal information being previously stored with the client of the network,

if said age data indicates that said user is older than said particular age, then sending an e-mail to said address indicating said request was received,

sending said content to said user if a permission response is received in response to said e-mail,

wherein the response is an e-mail sent in reply.

23. (previously presented) A method of authenticating a user comprising:

pre-storing in a processing device, personal information regarding said user, said personal information including an e-mail address and a value indicating a personal characteristic,

sending from the processing device a request for access to content restricted to users based on a cut-off associated with said personal characteristic,

sending from the processing device said personal information to the provider of said content,

receiving at said e-mail address a request to permit access to said content, said step of receiving being dependant upon a comparison of the value stored in said personal information and said cut-off, and

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sending the requested content to the processing device dependant upon whether another user replies to said request to permit access.

24. (original) The method of claim 23 wherein said value represents the age of said user and said cut-off represents the age a user must be in order to receive said content.

25. (original) The method of claim 23 wherein said value of said personal characteristic represents whether a user is entitled to receive a particular category of content and said cut-off represents whether said content is in said category.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein the step of prestoring personal information further includes storing a password associated with said personal information, and said method further includes preventing changes to said personal information without entry of said password.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said steps of sending and receiving are implemented by a client in a client/server network.

28. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said network is the Internet and said content is requested via a browser.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28 further comprising the step of entering a password each time said browser is executed, and wherein said personal information is not sent unless said password is associated with said personal information.

30. (previously presented) A method of authenticating a user comprising:

pre-storing in a processing device, personal information regarding said user, said personal information including an e-mail address and a value associated with a personal characteristic,

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sending from the processing device a request for access to content restricted to users based on a cut-off associated with said personal characteristic,

sending from the processing device said personal information to the provider of said content,

receiving at said e-mail address a request to permit access to said content, said step of receiving being dependant upon a comparison of the value stored in said personal information and said cut-off, and

sending the requested content to the processing device dependant upon whether another user replies to said request to permit access,

wherein said step of storing personal information includes obtaining the age of said user and, if said age is below a particular age, then obtaining and storing said e-mail address.

31. (original) The method of claim 30 wherein said cut-off represents a user's possible age and said particular age corresponds with said cut-off.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein step of storing said personal information comprises prompting said user to enter said personal information the first time the user sends said request for said content.

33. (withdrawn) A method of authenticating the age of a user comprising:

storing personal information regarding said user, said personal information including a value associated with a personal characteristic, said personal information further associated with biometric information of said user,

inputting biometric information,

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sending a request for access to content restricted to users based on a cut-off associated with said personal characteristic,

sending said personal information to the provider of said content if said inputted biometric information matches the biometric information contained in said personal information, and

receiving said content.

34. (withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein said biometric information comprises a fingerprint.

35. (cancelled)

36. (cancelled)

37. (cancelled)

38. (cancelled)

39. (withdrawn) A system of authenticating a user comprising:

a processor for executing instructions,
a biometric input device for obtaining information about a user,

instructions, said instructions including: storing personal information regarding said user, said personal information including a value associated with a personal characteristic, said personal information further associated with biometric information of said user; inputting biometric information; sending a request for access to content restricted to users based on a cut-off associated with said personal characteristic; sending said personal information to the provider of said content if said inputted biometric information matches the biometric information contained in said personal information; and receiving said content.

40. (currently amended) A method of authenticating a user comprising:

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receiving a request for information from a user of a processing device,

receiving with at least one processor, personal information associated with said user, said personal information including an address and age information, the personal information having been pre-stored by the processing device of the user;

sending a permission request to said address, said permission request including a request for permission to provide information to said user,

receiving permission in response to said permission request, and

sending information to said user of the processing device in response to said request for information,

~~The method of claim 1~~ wherein said personal information includes a second address associated with said user, said method further including the step of notifying said user at said second address if said permission was received in response to said permission request.